Athens and Sparta were two cities, that although were in similar areas, had two completely different cultures. Athens was sophisticated, and the Athenians spent their time developing their minds with philosophy, science, math and art. The Spartans were more into the body than the mind and spent there time developing their military expertise, strengthening their army and protecting their city. These differences in culture seem strange to me considering their relative closeness and similarity in the geographic situations.

First, there were the legacies each city left behind. The Athenians left behind artifacts of showing their development of the minds, while the Spartans left behind their developments in the military area. The Athenians left behind pottery and art works displaying their art which sometimes depicted everyday life. The Spartans left behind many weapons, and little to none art. The Athenians architecture displayed the pride they had in their city, and the time they put into building it. There are also the documents found recording the advances that they made in philosophy, science and math. The Spartans did not leave behind any artifacts evidencing that they put much stock into educational advances. We know that the Athenians and Spartans were different because of the artifacts left behind by each of them.

The Athenian and Spartan governments were also very different. Sparta had an oligarchy, while Athens had a direct democracy. Being ruled by an oligarchy means, “ruled by few,” Sparta had two kings both of whom were generals of Sparta’s vast army. Athens having a direct democracy meant that everyone in the community, not including women and young children, were a part of it. The people would elect officials who were in charge of the government. There was also the council of 500 which was in charge of carrying out decisions made at The Assembly which everyone in the community was allowed to attend and voice their opinions. The Spartans on the other hand mixed many aspects of government. They were ruled by kings, who had a vote, they had an assembly who had a vote, and they had a council, who also had a vote. Each of these branches of their government could veto each other’s decisions. Athens and Sparta had different types of government because one was a direct democracy where the people were closely involved, and one was an oligarchy where only select few were involved and were allowed to participate.

The education of Athenians and Spartans were also very different. The Athenians formally only educated the boys, although if a girl’s family was wealthy they may have a governess to teach her spinning, weaving and other domestic art. The boys were taught reading, writing, mathematics, poetry, sport and gymnastics. Depending on how wealthy your family was, you may go to school until you were fourteen, eighteen or sometimes your mid-twenties. Then the boys entered a military training camp for two years, which when finished was the end of their education. The Spartans education focused more on military training. Boys were taken away from their families at seven years old, they were given barely anything to eat and only a cloak to learn survival skills. At twenty they were ranked as military officials, and at thirty they were dedicated to the state and were then allowed to marry, although they still lived in military barracks. Girls were educated more in Sparta than in Athens. They were taught reading and writing, gymnastics, athletics and survival skills. The education in Sparta and Athens were different because of the emphasis placed on each category, Spartans focused more on military, while Athens focused more on academia.